

Appln. No.: 09/373,230
Amdt. dated: June 5, 2007
Reply to Office Action of October 4, 2006

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-17 (Cancelled).

18 (Currently amended). An isolated variant of interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, which IFN- γ production inducing protein has an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, ~~wherein~~ where the Xaa in SEQ ID NO:2 is Met or Thr, ~~and wherein,~~ in said variant thereof has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, except that (i) one or more amino acids in SEQ ID NO:2 are replaced with other amino acids, (ii) one or more amino acids are added to the N- and C-termini ~~terminals~~ in SEQ ID NO:2, and/or (iii) one or more amino acids in the N- and C-termini ~~terminals~~ in SEQ ID NO:2 are deleted, while retaining IFN- γ production inducing ability, said ~~protein~~ variant inducing IFN- γ production when administered to mouse and rat, exhibiting a single protein band when electrophoresed on sodium dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE), and having a molecular weight of 19,000 \pm 5,000 daltons on gel filtration and SDS-PAGE.

19 (Currently amended). A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and, as an active ingredient, the ~~protein~~ variant of claim 18.

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20(New). An isolated variant of interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein, also known as IGIF and IL-18, which IFN- γ production inducing protein has an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, where the Xaa in SEQ ID NO:2 is Met or Thr, wherein said variant thereof has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 except that (i) one or more amino acids but not so many are replaced with other amino acids, (ii) one or more amino acids but not so many are added to the N- and C-termini in SEQ ID NO:2, and/or (iii) one or more amino acids but not so many in the N- and C-termini in SEQ ID NO:2 are deleted, while substantially retaining the biological properties inherent to the interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein having the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, said variant inducing IFN- γ production when administered to mouse and rat, exhibiting a single protein band when electrophoresed on sodium dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE), and having a molecular weight of 19,000 \pm 5,000 daltons on gel filtration and SDS-PAGE.

21(New). A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and, as an active ingredient, the variant of claim 20.

22(New). An isolated interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein, not identical to a protein having the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, obtainable by recombinant DNA technology using the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, said interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) production inducing protein having biological properties inherent to the protein having the amino

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acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 when administered to mouse and rat, exhibiting a single protein band when electrophoresed on sodium dodecylsulfate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE), and having a molecular weight of $19,000 \pm 5,000$ daltons on gel filtration and SDS-PAGE.

23(New). A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier and, as an active ingredient, the variant of claim 22.